

Q&A

BIPEC video

Taping 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 17:

(NOTE: Van White and Nathan Wells will be here for the taping. It's an interview format – Van will ask the questions.)

1. What do you see as the role of business in policy development?

Every business owner has an interest in policy development, and should always be willing to express his or her opinions on the issues of the day. Businesspeople live in the “real” world and can bring real world solutions to the process.

Decisions they make affect not only their own business, but also their customers, suppliers, and the economy as a whole. The success of their business is tied very closely to the success of their families, so policies that help businesses create jobs and economic growth also help the state. Policies such as low taxes; a level, fair civil justice system; and the efficient delivery of state services

2. How does the state budget impact business?

Businesses have to live within their means. Our constitution requires a balanced state budget and, as we know from this recessionary economy, it's hard for government to live within its means. But we have to do it. A strong, stable economy provides the foundation on which businesses can grow.

3. In these trying economic times, there is a great need for job creation. What industry or sectors is Mississippi targeting?

Momentum Mississippi re-tooled the way we pursue economic development. It was important to get that done early in my first Administration, which we did.

Today, the aerospace, energy, and automotive sectors offer tremendous opportunities.

We are focusing on business recruitment and retention, community development, tourism development and export development, as well as innovative ways to develop unique Mississippi assets, such as cultural heritage, natural resources and small town life styles. Mississippi is the “Birthplace of America’s Music.”

4. Mississippi has had great success with tort reform. Is there any more we should or need to do?

We have to be vigilant that the hard-fought gains made in 2004 aren’t reversed.

5. With a struggling economy and many workers finding themselves without jobs, what role can workforce development play in the lives of workers and in the future of Mississippi?

I’m very proud of our workforce development programs, because a trained and trainable workforce is one of the key things all companies look for when they’re thinking of relocating or expanding.

We learned a few days ago that Mississippi has 27 percent of all the on-the-job training jobs in the nation. This is a great statistic because OJT is an area that really works - people get paid a subsidy to work, and they get valuable work experience.

We are focused on jobs and workforce development and our Mississippi Department of Employment Security has been very effective.

BIPEC points to work in, if possible:

BIPEC played a key role in the tort reform battle and success.

BIPEC has an important role in legislative and judicial campaigns.

- BIPEC is in large part responsible for changing the courts (Supreme and Appeals)

The BIPEC Legislator Jobs Report Card is the only objective grading system in the state that breaks down legislators' votes and holds them accountable.

BIPEC is a great conduit between business and government in Mississippi, an organization that informs businesses on what is really happening in Jackson.

Membership in BIPEC is important to the future of business in Mississippi and the success or failure of conservative and responsible business representation for our citizens.